

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

Office of Children's Issues, United States Department of State

adoption.state.gov



WELCOME

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A LOVING HOME

Thank you for visiting Adoption.State.Gov! Whether you found this site through the U.S. Department of State or stumbled across it on the world-wide web, we are pleased to welcome you to Adoption.State.Gov, your comprehensive resource on intercountry adoption.

Each year the United States welcomes more children into homes than any other nation in the world. Last year alone, Americans adopted nearly 20,000 children from abroad. There are numerous individuals in the intercountry adoption process including, adoptees, prospective adoptive parents, judges, attorneys, agencies, and social workers. We are dedicated to addressing the needs of all involved in the intercountry adoption process.

The Office of Children's Issues (CI), a division of the Bureau of Consular Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, plays an active role in the intercountry adoption process and serves as the U.S. Central Authority for the *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*. Also known as the *Hague Adoption Convention*, this is an international treaty that exists between the United States and 75 nations around the world. The Office of Children's Issues is responsible for the day-to-day oversight and implementation of the Convention in the United States.

We view the protection of children as our highest priority while actively engaging in the many matters relating to children and families as they cross international borders.

The Department of State is fully committed to protecting the welfare and interests of children, the most vulnerable of the world's citizens. We believe that *every child deserves a loving home*.

WHO WE ARE

OUR ROLES, OUR LEADERS

In the last five years, the United States has welcomed more than 100,000 children through intercountry adoption. The Office of Children's Issues is dedicated to assisting parents as they seek to provide a home to orphans abroad. Our office offers country specific adoption information and provides updates regarding the laws and regulations governing adoption in particular countries. Above all, the Office of Children's Issues advocates for all involved in the adoption process, particularly orphaned children.

The Office of Children's Issues, a division of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, United States Department of State, serves as the U.S. Central Authority for the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Hague Abduction Convention) and the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention). *The Hague Adoption Convention is the treaty that governs adoptions among the United States and nearly 75 other countries.*

JANICE L. JACOBS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS



Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs was sworn-in as the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs on June 10, 2008. Prior to assuming this position, she served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Consular Affairs and before that as U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

Ambassador Jacobs is a Senior Foreign Service Officer with 28 years of experience in Africa, Latin America and Europe. She has advanced foreign policy interests across a broad range of issues including democratization and human rights, trade and investment liberalization, counter-terrorism and immigration. She served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services from 2002-2005 and as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo from 2000-2002. Her career includes a mix of Washington, D.C. and overseas assignments, including working in the State Department's Visa Office, Operations Center, and Office of Cuban Affairs.

Ambassador Jacobs joined the Foreign Service in March 1980 after many years of overseas experience as a Foreign Service dependent. She has lived in Senegal, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia (twice), France, Mexico (twice), Nigeria, and Thailand. She received a BA in French and Education from Southern Illinois University in 1968 and a Master's in National Security Strategy from the National War College in 1995.

MICHELE T. BOND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE DIRECTORATE FOR OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICES

Michele T. Bond has been the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Directorate for Overseas Citizens Services since July 2007. Previously, she was the Director of the Office of Policy Coordination and Public Outreach in the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs. She has also served as Managing Director of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services.

Ms. Bond joined the Foreign Service in 1977 and has served in Guatemala, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Russia and The Netherlands. Her most recent overseas assignment was as Consul General in Amsterdam. She graduated with honors from Wellesley College and has Masters Degree from Georgetown University and the National War College.

STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

QUICK ANSWERS TO QUICK QUESTIONS

WHAT IS INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION?

Intercountry adoption is the process by which a child from a different country of citizenship than your own is adopted through permanent legal means and brought to your home country. Adoption, the legal transfer of parental rights from one parent to another, provides children with love and stability, and provides the opportunity to become healthy, productive adults. U.S. families adopt more than 20,000 children from foreign nations each year.

WHAT IS THE HAGUE ADOPTION CONVENTION?

The United States is part of an important treaty on intercountry adoption called, *The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*. Also called the Hague Adoption Convention, this treaty governs adoptions between the United States and nearly 75 other nations. The Hague Adoption Convention entered into force for the United States on April 1, 2008.

WHAT DOES THE HAGUE ADOPTION CONVENTION ACCOMPLISH?

The regulations set forth in the Convention provide important protections for both children and parents in the intercountry adoption process. These standards represent real progress and reflect our commitment to ensuring that adoptees receive all protections that every child deserves. In addition, it provides that all prospective adoptive parents from the U.S. receive appropriate assistance when engaged in the intercountry adoption process with a Convention country. The Convention also serves to prevent the abduction, sale of, or trafficking of children.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE PLAY?

The Department of State's Office of Children's Issues (a division of the Bureau of Consular Affairs) is the U.S. Central Authority for the Hague Adoption Convention and oversees compliance with the Convention and the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA). In this role, the Department of State also serves as U.S. liaison with other adoption Central Authorities around the world.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTION.STATE.GOV?

From social workers, to State authorities, and even adoptees and prospective adoptive parents, Adoption.State.Gov has been created to address the specific needs of all the key players in the intercountry adoption process. Adoption.State.Gov has also been designed with you, a member of the media, in mind as well. The site will: allow you to conduct research using a host of tools available on our website including interactive maps, country specific information, a glossary, and extensive FAQs; answer any questions you may have about the intercountry adoption process; provide Adoption Alerts in crisis situations as a spring board for story ideas; and inform you about how we work with U.S. Embassies on diplomatic efforts with host governments about adoption laws and procedures.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NOVEMBER LAUNCH DATE?

The official global launch date for Adoption.State.Gov is November 17, 2008, in support of National Adoption Day (www.nationaladoptionday.org) on November 15, 2008 and National Adoption Month (www.childwelfare.gov). The purpose of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month is two-fold: to push for the finalization of adoptions of children in the foster care system across the U.S. and to raise national awareness of the 129,000 children in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. The Department of State is fully committed to protecting the welfare and interests of children, the most vulnerable of the world's citizens both here and abroad.

CONNECT

HOW TO CONTACT US, PLUS OTHER MEDIA RESOURCES

For more information about the Adoption.State.Gov initiative, to setup interviews, or for general media assistance, please free contact us at:

Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs
(Includes the Office of Children's Issues)
202.647.2114; 202.647.1488
capresscontacts@state.gov
Adoption.State.Gov

Bureau of Consular Affairs
Travel.state.gov

OTHER RESOURCES

Press Contact for Department of State (all other offices)
202.647.2492
www.state.gov

Press Contact for Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
202.272.1200
www.uscis.gov

Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoptions Complaint Registry
<http://adoptionusca.state.gov/HCRWeb/WelcomeForm.aspx>